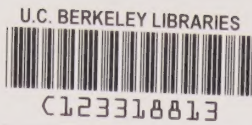


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BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
1414 Walnut Street
Berkeley, California 94709
(415) 644-6147-8

BOARD OF EDUCATION
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SUPERINTENDENT
Laval S. Wilson

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL
STUDIES LIBRARY

August 29, 1975

APR 4 1977

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

To the Berkeley Community:

There is a real possibility that some of the staff of Berkeley Unified School District will strike during the week of September 1. If this unprecedented job action takes place, we--the Superintendent and the Board of Education--will do all within our power to keep our schools open for the benefit of the students of Berkeley.

It is our understanding that such teacher action may occur as a result of their concern over the financial crisis existing in Berkeley and the serious, difficult decisions the Board has had to make regarding this crisis.

Suit was brought against the Board by the California Teachers Association and the Berkeley Teachers Association, who claimed the district acted improperly in making necessary budget revisions on June 28, 1975 to cut employees' salaries and fringe benefits.

However, Judge William H. Brailsford of the Alameda County Superior Court ruled on August 27 that the Board had indeed acted properly in making its decisions of June 28 under the circumstances of the financial emergency disclosed to it by the independent financial consultant firm of Elmer Fox & Company, who conducted an extensive investigation of our financial situation.

It is our sincere hope that the teachers will understand we acted in the only way left to us, and that we thoroughly regret the existence of this emergency.

In the event a strike does occur, the regular teachers of some of our students may not provide teaching services. Every effort will be made to provide substitutes where there are vacancies. In addition, there may be reduced services in the bus and food programs, but it is our hope that such services will continue uninterrupted. Every effort is being made at this time to assure this. School hours will remain unchanged.

Let me emphasize that if there is a strike, schools will be open and we look forward to having Berkeley's children in school as usual on September 3.

For up-to-the-minute announcements concerning the strike issue, please listen to the following radio stations: KRE (1400), KSFO (560), KCBS (740), KGO (810), KDIA (1310).

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. We will keep you informed about this situation.

Sincerely,

Laval S. Wilson
Superintendent of Schools

8/2

They Don't Grow Alike So Why Should They Learn Alike?



DR. LAVAL S. WILSON
Superintendent of Schools
Berkeley Unified School District
1414 Walnut Street
Berkeley, CA 94709

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FIRST CLASS

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 26, 1975

TO: THE STAFF AND COMMUNITY
 FROM: THE BERKELEY BOARD OF EDUCATION

We welcome you back to school soberly, but hopefully. The summer has been tense for all of us engaged in planning for the 75-76 school year. All of us are justifiably concerned about the education of our children, jobs, and classroom conditions.

Rumors abound -- they do none of us any good.

In the early summer the Board and the community were stunned to learn that a financial crisis existed in the district which had not been previously revealed through the budget figures. This emergency was documented by an investigation by the Elmer Fox and Company, the district's financial consultants. This placed an entirely new light on the policies which the Board had adopted on April 15, 1975 concerning economic items within the district.

Somehow, beyond all this, a school system must now function for the 14,000 students of our community; and loving, caring adults must be the key ingredient. In an effort to begin the school year in an honest relationship, the Board is restating here the dismal events of the 1975-76 Budget Development.

1. Budget considerations for 1975-76 began in spring, with a deficit of \$2.6 million projected if all programs and personnel were carried forward.
2. In April the Board and staff concluded meet and confer sessions and agreed to (a) no layoffs despite a declining student enrollment, (b) no salary increase, but a commitment to build toward a 6½% increase through new money if any, and savings, (c) transfer of support and administrative staff to fill vacant classroom positions, allowing attrition to reduce the total number of people on the payroll, (d) maintenance of the 35-week work year and the 6½-hour work day for teachers, which includes one-half hour duty-free lunch, and one-half hour or one period preparation time, and (e) continuance of the automatic salary schedule increments, approximately equal to 3%. Severe curtailment of supplies, books, maintenance, administrative positions and educational programs reduced and projected deficit to \$400,000, and budget workshops were scheduled to refine projections in order to balance the budget, as required by law.
3. On June 16, 1975, the Board learned for the first time, from the Business Manager, that the income figures of the district had been overestimated by over a half million dollars. Elmer Fox and Company discovered additional errors and budget considerations which brought the deficit still to be solved after the severe cutbacks already planned from the \$400,000 to a staggering \$3.9 million.
4. The Board was compelled to reopen meet and confer sessions in the light of the new financial information. However, the option to lay off staff was no longer available because the deadline for concluding layoffs was May 15. The Board reopened every item of the recently concluded negotiations that carried a price tag, including salaries, hoping to resolve the emergency through the meet and confer process.
5. Thus far, the Certificated Employees Council has refused to meet and confer to resolve the financial emergency. The classified employees have met and conferred concerning needed changes.
6. The Board attempted to meet and confer for two weeks, then held a public hearing and held off action for another week to accommodate public response to the anticipated policy changes. The Board kept open the opportunity to meet and confer during that week. In addition, the Board had met publicly 13 times in the month of July to cope with the enormous budget problems.
7. A citizen's committee, the Fiscal Review Committee, which included representation from all district employee organizations, investigated the financial situation and reported, at the end of July, that it was indeed as critical as the Board had been informed by the Elmer Fox accounting firm.
8. In August the Board adopted new policies which enabled the budget to be balanced, and school to be operated for 175 student days as required by law. The significant policy revisions include:
 - a. A salary decrease of 2¼% for certificated employees, and 1.5% for classified employees.
 - b. A reduced fringe benefit package which does, however, still include a health plan and a dental plan for employees and their families, and a life insurance policy.
 - c. An increase by two in pupil/teacher ratio, in K-3, but the deployment of staff has become a school site decision.
 - d. Fewer support and administrative personnel.
 - e. Increased flexibility in transferring staff to accommodate district needs and avoid hiring.
 - f. The basic 6½-hour teacher work day, which includes a duty-free lunch and preparation period.
 - g. The automatic 3% salary increment.
9. The Board increased the Children's Center override tax by 32 cents. This permits significant expansion of children's centers and the transfer of many employees to that payroll, without which the salary decrease required to balance the budget would have been about 4%.
10. On August 5, the night the budget was adopted, the Board committed all new funds from SB 220, should it be passed by the Legislature, to building back salaries. SB 220 has now become law, and through a permitted increase in the tax levy, Berkeley realizes about \$260,000. This has the effect of making the reduction in salaries approximately 1.2% for certificated and .8% for classified employees.

The Board knows that this will not be an easy year for anyone. Despite the serious cutbacks of supplies and reduction through attrition of support staff, Berkeley still provides a far richer educational environment than most school districts. Despite the reduction of salaries and fringe benefits, Berkeley's salaries and fringe benefits are still by comparison good. The Board has done everything in its power to see that staff did not alone carry the brunt of the financial crisis. The youngsters will feel the effect of an austere supply budget and the community has been taxed. We hope that the year will begin with an effort on everyone's part to survive with understanding and grace.

*[Berkeley Board of Education]
 School Administration Berkeley
 Strikes Teachers*